

## How God's Word is Spread, Part 4 - Acts 19:13-20 - March 22<sup>nd</sup>, 2009

<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- We just read a passage in our Bibles that, by most accounts, would seem to not really have any direct application to our lives today.</li><li>- I am keenly aware that as a pastor and Bible teacher that there are many places in the Bible that can, at first glance, seem, well, boring!</li><li>- Perhaps this is one of those places. I mean honestly, how does Acts 19 benefit me when my alarm clock goes off Monday morning?</li></ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- I'm so glad you asked! Though what takes place here in Acts 19 happened almost 2,000 years ago, it is most beneficial to us now.</li><li>- Here's why: the Apostle, and these 12 men with him, are faced with unspeakable uncertainty about the future much like we are today.</li><li>- Yet they're somehow, against all odds, able to reach people with the good news of salvation from eternal damnation because of Christ.</li></ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- This is part four of a series titled: "How God's Word is Spread," however, it could also be titled, "how to survive what lies ahead."</li><li>- You may not be in ministry preaching the Gospel and spreading the Word, but what they did back then, is exactly what we need now.</li><li>- We have several clues woven into the fabric of our text as to how they were able to do what they did, with all that was against them.</li></ul>
<b><u>1. By patient boldness (Verse 8a)</u></b> v8a Paul patiently, but boldly, preaches for a period of three months there in the Synagogue. This is the longest period of time he did this.
<b><u>2. By persistent persuasion (Verse 8b)</u></b> v8b We're told he argued persistently and persuasively during those three months. He wasn't argumentative, he used winning words.
<b><u>3. By obstinate opposition (Verse 9a)</u></b> v9a The Apostle Paul is met with obstinance from those who refused to believe and, we're told that they maligned the Way, publicly.
<b><u>4. By the Holy Spirit's power (Verse 9b)</u></b> v9b After this obstinate opposition, Paul leaves, but not before taking with him those disciples that had been baptized in the Holy Spirit.
<b><u>5. By daily commitment (Verse 9c)</u></b> v9c After leaving, they go to the school of Tyrannus every day during their time off during the "heat of the day," to have their discussions.
<b><u>6. By doing it long term (Verse 10a)</u></b> v10a Luke, by the Holy Spirit, tells us that these daily lectures in the school of Tyrannus went on for two years! Two years? Yes, Two!
<b><u>7. By equipping others (Verse 10b)</u></b> v10b All the Jews and Greeks in that region heard God's Word, because for two years Paul had equipped the 12 Ephesian disciples.
<b><u>8. By extraordinary miracles (Verse 11)</u></b> v11 We're told that God did "extraordinary miracles through Paul. In other words, there are ordinary miracles, and extraordinary miracles.
<b><u>9. By unusual means (Verse 12)</u></b> 12 so that even handkerchiefs and aprons that had touched him were taken to the sick, and their illnesses were cured and the evil spirits left them. v12 The miracles were so unusual that even Paul's head bands and tent making aprons were healing the sick and curing the evil spirits. - Ok, I know this is getting a little weird, but let's take a look at the unusual means that God used to spread the Word and reach the lost.
<b><u>"It was unusual for God to use handkerchiefs or aprons in such a way. "The pieces of material were presumably those which Paul used in his tent making or leather-working - the sweat-rags for tying around his head and the aprons for tying around his waist." F.F. Bruce</u></b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- This isn't the first time God chose to use something so unusual to heal the sick and save the lost. We have a similar case in Acts 5:15.</li></ul>
<b>Acts 5:12-15</b> 12 The apostles performed many miraculous signs and wonders among the people. And all the believers used to meet together in Solomon's Colonnade. 13 No one else dared join them, even though they were highly regarded by the people. 14 Nevertheless, more and more men and women believed in the Lord and were added to their number. 15 As a result, people brought the sick into the streets and laid them on beds and mats so that at least Peter's shadow might fall on some of them as he passed by. NIV
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- It's important to understand that it's not Paul's sweat bands and aprons, or Peter's shadow, as unusual as they are, that actually does it.</li><li>- They are merely the points of contact that trigger the faith of the individual. We see this demonstrated in the gospel of Matthew 14.</li></ul>
<b>Matthew 14:34-36</b> 34 When they had crossed over, they landed at Gennesaret. 35 And when the men of that place recognized Jesus, they sent word to all the surrounding country. People brought all their sick to him 36 and begged him to let the sick just touch the edge of his cloak, and all who touched him were healed. NIV
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Again, it's not the cloth that heals it's our faith in Jesus that heals. There's another example of this found in Luke's Gospel 8:43-48.</li></ul>
<b>Luke 8:43-48</b> 43 And a woman was there who had been subject to bleeding for twelve years, but no one could heal her. 44 She came up behind him and touched the edge of his cloak, and immediately her bleeding stopped. 45 "Who touched me?" Jesus asked. When they all denied it, Peter said, "Master, the people are crowding and pressing against you." 46 But Jesus said, "Someone touched me; I know that power has gone out from me." 47 Then the woman, seeing that she could not go unnoticed, came trembling and fell at his feet. In the presence of all the people, she told why she had touched him and how she had been instantly healed. 48 Then he said to her, "Daughter, your faith has healed you. Go in peace." NIV

- Let me hasten to add a word of caution; it's good to anticipate God using unusual means, but don't expect He will always do it this way.
- It's important to know that the Ephesians were steeped in the superstitious practice of magic and sorcery, as we'll soon see.
- God is sort of meeting them right where they are at even in the midst of their superstition so as to reach them and ultimately save them.

### **10. By knowing the God of the Word (Verses 13-16)**

13 Some Jews who went around driving out evil spirits tried to invoke the name of the Lord Jesus over those who were demon-possessed. They would say, "In the name of Jesus, whom Paul preaches, I command you to come out." 14 Seven sons of Sceva, a Jewish chief priest, were doing this. 15[One day] the evil spirit answered them, "Jesus I know, and I know about Paul, but who are you?" 16 Then the man who had the evil spirit jumped on them and overpowered them all. He gave them such a beating that they ran out of the house naked and bleeding.

v13-14 Seven sons of a Jewish chief priest named Sceva were imitating Paul and performing these exorcisms, probably to make money.

v15 We're told that one day the evil spirit answered them saying; "Jesus I know, and I know about Paul, but who are you?"

v16 Then the demon possessed man jumps on them and brutally beats them so badly that they run out of the house naked and bleeding.

- I have to admit that sometimes passages like this are a little over the top for me. Quite frankly, this is just "too much information," really!
- Why do I need to know this? Well, again, there must be something I need to see here, or God wouldn't have had Luke record it here.
- I believe the reason these guys were beat so badly by the demon was because they only knew the word(s), not the God of the Word.

- They didn't have a saving relationship with Jesus Christ. They only used His name to accomplish their own ends. They were imposters.
- How can I spread the Word about the good news of salvation in Jesus Christ unless I've been truly saved in a relationship with Him?
- How can I spread a cold unless I actually, truly have one? To know the Bible isn't enough, I have to know the God of the Bible too!

**Jeremiah 9:23-24** 23 This is what the LORD says: "Let not the wise man boast of his wisdom or the strong man boast of his strength or the rich man boast of his riches, 24 but let him who boasts boast about this: that he understands and knows me,

### **11. By honoring the name of Jesus (Verses 17-18)**

17 When this became known to the Jews and Greeks living in Ephesus, they were all seized with fear, and the name of the Lord Jesus was held in high honor.

v17 When word of this spread to the Jews and Greeks in Ephesus, they were seized with fear and held the name of Jesus in high honor.

- It's interesting to note that when they realized that even the demons fear the name of the Lord Jesus, that He is held in high honor.

**Acts 2:21** And everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved.' NIV

**Acts 4:12** Salvation is found in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given to men by which we must be saved." NIV

### **12. By confessing and renouncing sin (Verses 19-20)**

18 Many of those who believed now came and openly confessed their evil deeds. 19 A number who had practiced sorcery brought their scrolls together and burned them publicly. When they calculated the value of the scrolls, the total came to fifty thousand drachmas. 20 In this way the word of the Lord spread widely and grew in power.

v18-19 Many who believed confessed their evil practices and even publicly burned their scrolls worth probably about a million dollars.

v20 We're told that it was in this way that the Word of the Lord spread widely and grew in power throughout Ephesus.

- In other words, this is the way that the Word of God is spread. When we confess and renounce, God is allowed to bless and prosper.

**Proverbs 28:13** He who conceals his sins does not prosper, but whoever confesses and renounces them finds mercy. NIV

"You will have enough temptation in your own mind without going after these things. Is there any habit, any practice, that you have got that defiles your soul? If Christ loves you, and you come and trust in him, you will make short work of it. Have done with it, and have done with it forever."

Charles Spurgeon